UNITED
NATIONS

S

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/24263
10 July 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

FURTHER REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL PURSUANT TO SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS 757 (1992), 758 (1992) and 761 (1992)

INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted to the Security Council pursuant to paragraphs 17 and 18 of its resolution 757 (1992), as well as to its resolutions 758 (1992) and 761 (1992). I have kept the Council informed, through oral statements and written communications on my behalf, of progress relating to the reopening of Sarajevo airport under the auspices of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). The purpose of the present report is to provide a comprehensive review of developments in this regard following the adoption by the Security Council of the above resolutions. It contains information available to the Secretariat up to 1600 hours, New York time, on Thursday, 9 July 1992.

I. BACKGROUND

2. On 6 June 1992, I reported to the Security Council that, in partial fulfilment of its resolution 757 (1992), UNPROFOR had, on 5 June, negotiated an agreement for the handing over to it of Sarajevo airport so that it could be made available for humanitarian purposes (S/24075). By its resolution 758 (1992), adopted on 8 June 1992, the Council approved my report and, inter alia, authorized me to proceed to the first phase of a concept of operations developed by the Force Commander, Lt. Gen. Satish Nambiar, which envisaged implementation of the airport agreement in four phases.

3. Following intensive work by UNPROFOR to establish the modalities of implementation of the agreement, and a visit to Sarajevo by President Mitterrand of France on 28 June, I further reported on 29 June to the Council, which adopted its resolution 761 (1992) on that date. This resolution authorized me immediately to deploy additional elements of UNPROFOR to ensure the security and functioning of Sarajevo airport and the delivery of humanitarian assistance in accordance with my report of 6 June. It also called upon all parties and others concerned to comply fully with the agreement of 5 June, and, in particular, to maintain an absolute and

unconditional cease-fire; and appealed to all sides to cooperate fully with UNPROFOR in the reopening of the airport, to exercise the utmost restraint, and not to seek any military advantage in this situation.

4. It will also be recalled that the Council, in resolution 757 (1992), had demanded that all parties and others concerned create immediately the necessary conditions for the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian supplies to Sarajevo and other destinations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including the establishment of a security zone encompassing Sarajevo and its airport and respecting the agreements signed in Geneva on 22 May 1992. It also requested me to continue to use my good offices in order to achieve the objectives mentioned above, and invited me to keep under continuous review any further measures that might become necessary to ensure unimpeded delivery of humanitarian supplies. Resolution 758 (1992) endorsed these objectives, and resolution 761 (1992) additionally demanded that all parties and others concerned cooperate fully with UNPROFOR and international humanitarian agencies and organizations, and take all necessary steps to ensure the safety of their personnel. The Council stated that, in the absence of such cooperation, it did not exclude other measures to deliver humanitarian assistance to Sarajevo and its environs.

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 5 JUNE AGREEMENT

A. The cease-fire

5. The 5 June airport agreement (S/24075, annex) reaffirmed, in article 1, the 1 June cease-fire in and around Sarajevo. The parties would provide liaison personnel to assist in its verification. In article 2, the parties agreed that (a) all anti-aircraft weapon systems would be withdrawn from positions from which they could engage the airport and its air approaches, and be placed under UNPROFOR supervision, and (b) all artillery, mortar, ground-to-ground missile systems and tanks within range of the airport would be concentrated in areas agreed by UNPROFOR and subject to UNPROFOR observation at the firing line. These measures were to be established prior to the opening of the airport. Article 9 of the agreement stated that, to ensure the safe movement of humanitarian aid and related personnel, security corridors between the airport and the city would be established and would function under UNPROFOR's control.

6. Despite the endeavours of UNPROFOR's Sector Commander, Maj. Gen. Lewis MacKenzie, a cease-fire in and around Sarajevo has not been fully established at any time. Artillery, mortar, tank and small-arms exchanges have taken place on each day since the United Nations flag was raised on 29 June and the airport was opened by the first flight carrying humanitarian aid. Nor has the concentration of weaponry under UNPROFOR observation, required by article 2 of the agreement, yet been completed to the Sector Commander's satisfaction. While humanitarian aid has been moved into the city by convoys of UNPROFOR and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), secure corridors have not yet been established through the cooperation of the parties.

7. On a number of occasions since 29 June, fighting in the adjacent areas has come very close to the airport itself, although installations, aircraft and personnel at the airport have not themselves been targeted. Such fighting has none the less, at times, been intense, and sniper fire has been directed at UNPROFOR vehicles, although UNHCR's aid vehicles have not been attacked.

B. Functioning of the airport

8. By 9 July at 2200 hours local time, more than 100 planes from 15 countries carrying over 1,000 metric tons of food and humanitarian aid had arrived at the airport. On some days, as many as 17 have landed; on one such date (5 July), 300 tons of aid were brought in and unloaded. Despite the availability of only manual ground-handling, 240 tons were that day moved to distribution points in the city, and many aircraft were able to depart within an hour of arrival. These high standards have been maintained despite the considerable constraints described in my letter of 1 July 1992 (S/24222), many of which persist.

9. There has been a gradual build-up of UNPROFOR personnel in the sector. The first group of 30 was deployed to the airport on 28 June. French troops began to arrive on 1 July and the Canadian battalion arrived from United Nations Protected Area Sector West on 2 July. By 3 July all available United Nations military observers (UNMOs) and troops were deployed at the airport, with the two sides, and at other locations in Sarajevo. The current strength (military, United Nations civilian police (UNCIVPOL) and civilians) in the sector is 1,104. As the Council is aware, the deployment of the Canadian battalion from Sector West is on a temporary basis only, pending the arrival around 20-25 July of battalions being contributed by Egypt, France and Ukraine, which would permit the return of the Canadian battalion to Croatia. Other support elements are being provided by the Netherlands and Norway.

10. I am particularly pleased to note that my request to Governments to facilitate UNHCR's coordination role in the airlift operation has now been fully met. UNHCR staff members at the airport are working with UNPROFOR in the control of relief flights. UNHCR then ensures the expeditious dispatch of relief items to Sarajevo and its environs. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Madame Sadako Ogata, visited Sarajevo on 8 July to review the relief operation.

III. OBSERVATIONS

11. General Nambiar visited the Sector on 5 July to inspect the UNPROFOR operation there and to call upon leaders of the opposing forces. He has reported to me that General MacKenzie and the various elements in Sarajevo under his leadership are doing a magnificent job under conditions of great difficulty and danger. Though living conditions are, at best, spartan, morale is high. It could scarcely have been anticipated, given the situation, that the operation would have opened so effectively.

12. However, as the operation has taken shape, it has become apparent that the initial estimates of the additions required to the strength of UNPROFOR, contained in paragraph 8 of my report of 6 June 1992 (S/24075), were inadequate. The planned deployment of three small battalions rather than one reinforced battalion, as originally envisaged, and the need for air traffic control and handling elements, an artillery-locating radar platoon, a helicopter unit, a signals platoon and a medical platoon have raised the total number of additional personnel required to some 1,600. I shall be grateful for the Council's approval of this revised figure. A revised estimate of financial implications is being issued as addendum 1 to the present report.

13. It must also be stated that, despite the so far encouraging start of the operation, the circumstances surrounding it remain worrisome, and the success of the operation continues to hang by a slender thread. As mentioned earlier, three of the basic conditions stipulated in the 5 June agreement have not been complied with by either side - a cease-fire; the complete concentration of heavy weaponry under UNPROFOR monitoring; and the establishment of security corridors. Several members of the UNPROFOR military component have been slightly wounded by gunfire, and one soldier lost part of a leg in a mine explosion on 9 July. Fighting has continued, with only temporary lulls, in Sarajevo and all around the airport itself. The military situation remains unstable as forces opposed to those of the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) appear to be seeking to press home the strategic advantage resulting from the handing over of the airport to UNPROFOR. The SDS forces in turn continue to respond with heavy weaponry into populated areas of the city. Reports of a military advance by Croatian forces to the vicinity of Sarajevo have been received from several sources. However, UNPROFOR has no independent means of verifying such reports. UNPROFOR personnel have reported encountering a checkpoint manned by forces flying the Croatian national flag on the city's outskirts on the edge of the SDS-controlled suburb of Ilidza.

14. In this context of limited resources and minimal security, UNPROFOR has been unable at this time to respond positively to the many requests it has received for humanitarian evacuation. The situation prevailing at Sarajevo airport, on the outskirts and within the city is extremely precarious. Because of this, as well as the operational considerations of the relief operation, it has not been possible to entertain initiatives for the evacuation by air of cases of special humanitarian concern. None the less, options for the evacuation of critical medical cases are being reviewed. The feasibility of such options will be determined, inter alia, by the security threat to the intended beneficiaries. Should such evacuations be possible, they would be undertaken in close coordination between UNPROFOR and UNHCR, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, according to well-established and internationally recognized principles of international humanitarian law.

15. On 3 July, the Chairman of the European Community's Conference on Yugoslavia, Lord Carrington, visited Sarajevo and met with the President of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the leadership of the SDS. On 9 July he briefed members of the Security Council on the outcome of his visit. When General Nambiar, accompanied by UNPROFOR Director of Civil

Affairs, Mr. Cedric Thornberry, and by General MacKenzie, called upon President Izetbegovic on 5 July, the President, while calling for the implementation of the provisions of resolution 757 (1992) on the establishment of a security zone around Sarajevo, agreed that the basic conditions for implementing even the more limited airport agreement had not yet been fully satisfied. He emphasized that the people of Sarajevo were still being attacked and killed by the forces of the SDS, and that some means had to be found to end the onslaught. While he was in favour of demilitarizing the contested area of Dobrinja, adjacent to the airport, he felt that other SDS-held neighbourhoods should also be similarly demilitarized and placed under UNPROFOR control.

16. During a subsequent meeting with Dr. Karadzic and Professor Koljevic of the SDS and the Commander of the army of the so-called "Serb Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina", General Mladic, the Force Commander was told that the Serb forces were trying to maintain a unilateral cease-fire, but that it was impossible not to respond to the worst provocations and attacks from the other side. Allegations were made of a large Croatian military intervention. The SDS leaders said that their handing over of the airport to UNPROFOR had not led to peace and negotiations on the overall crisis in the Republic. They stated that they were willing to negotiate without preconditions, face-to-face with the Presidency; but that the President had refused to do this and was seeking to obtain external military intervention by almost any means, and that any such intervention could be disastrous for all concerned. General Nambiar took note of these statements but stressed that the issues raised lay outside the mandate of UNPROFOR.

17. General Nambiar has informed me that he is greatly perturbed by the situation which now exists in Sarajevo, and by the many reports and indications of deteriorating conditions throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. (It will be recalled that UNPROFOR's presence in the country is limited to Sarajevo and Bihac.) The current success of the airport operation is an outstanding tribute to the determination and courage of all who are participating in it - the aircrews from donor countries who are flying aid to Sarajevo and the members of UNPROFOR and UNHCR who are ensuring its distribution. But their endeavours have not yet stimulated a corresponding initiative by the parties to seek a lasting peace based on a political settlement.

18. In conclusion, it is clear that despite an encouraging start, the Sarajevo airport operation is based upon foundations of the utmost fragility. The continuing military conflict in the area could at any moment encroach upon the airport and disrupt the arrival and distribution of relief goods. Meanwhile, the provision of humanitarian aid to the rest of the country is sparse, intermittent, and hazardous. While efforts continue to be made by humanitarian agencies to open up routes to other parts of the Republic, vast areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina remain in desperate need of assistance. Only urgent efforts by the international community to address the basic causes of the conflict, including negotiations with all the parties involved in it, can resolve what has emerged as one of the worst humanitarian emergencies of our time.